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Digital oral history: Using the Web to give history new life

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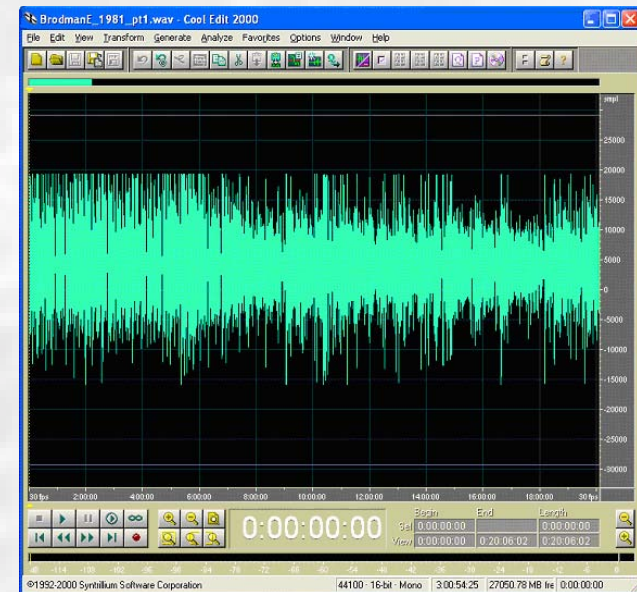
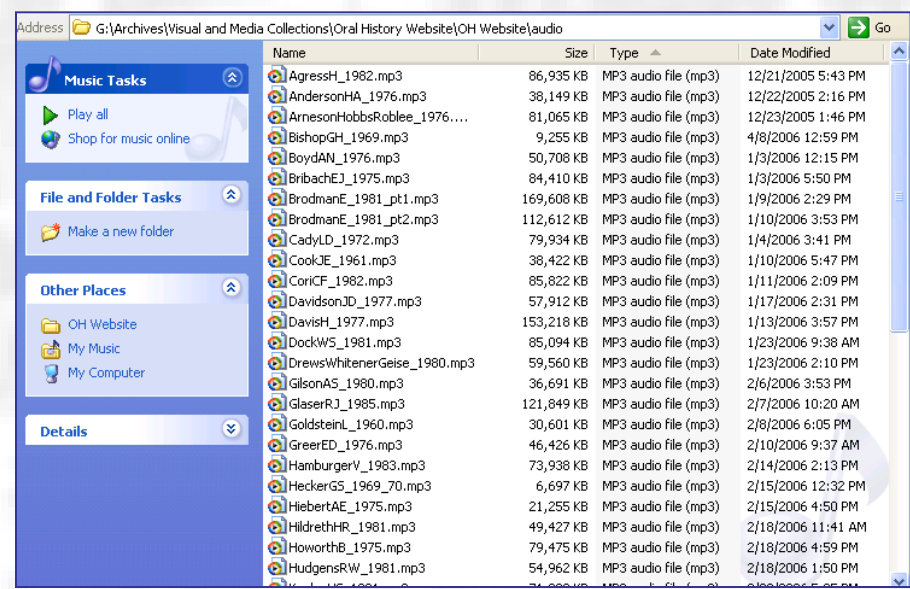
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Washington University School of Medicine Oral History Project

Analog to Digital

- Sound waves are converted through sampling into bits.
- Sampling rate of 44.1 kHz at 16-bit resolution using Cool Edit (now Adobe Audition)
- Saved as uncompressed WAV files
- Converted to compressed MP3 files for Web delivery



Conversion of analog resources into digital resources:

- Provides increased access
- Allows universal distribution using Real Player, Windows Media Player, or QuickTime
- Preserves your unique resources in a mutable format



DIGITAL ORAL HISTORY: Using the Web to Give History New Life

<http://beckerexhibits.wustl.edu/oral/index.html>

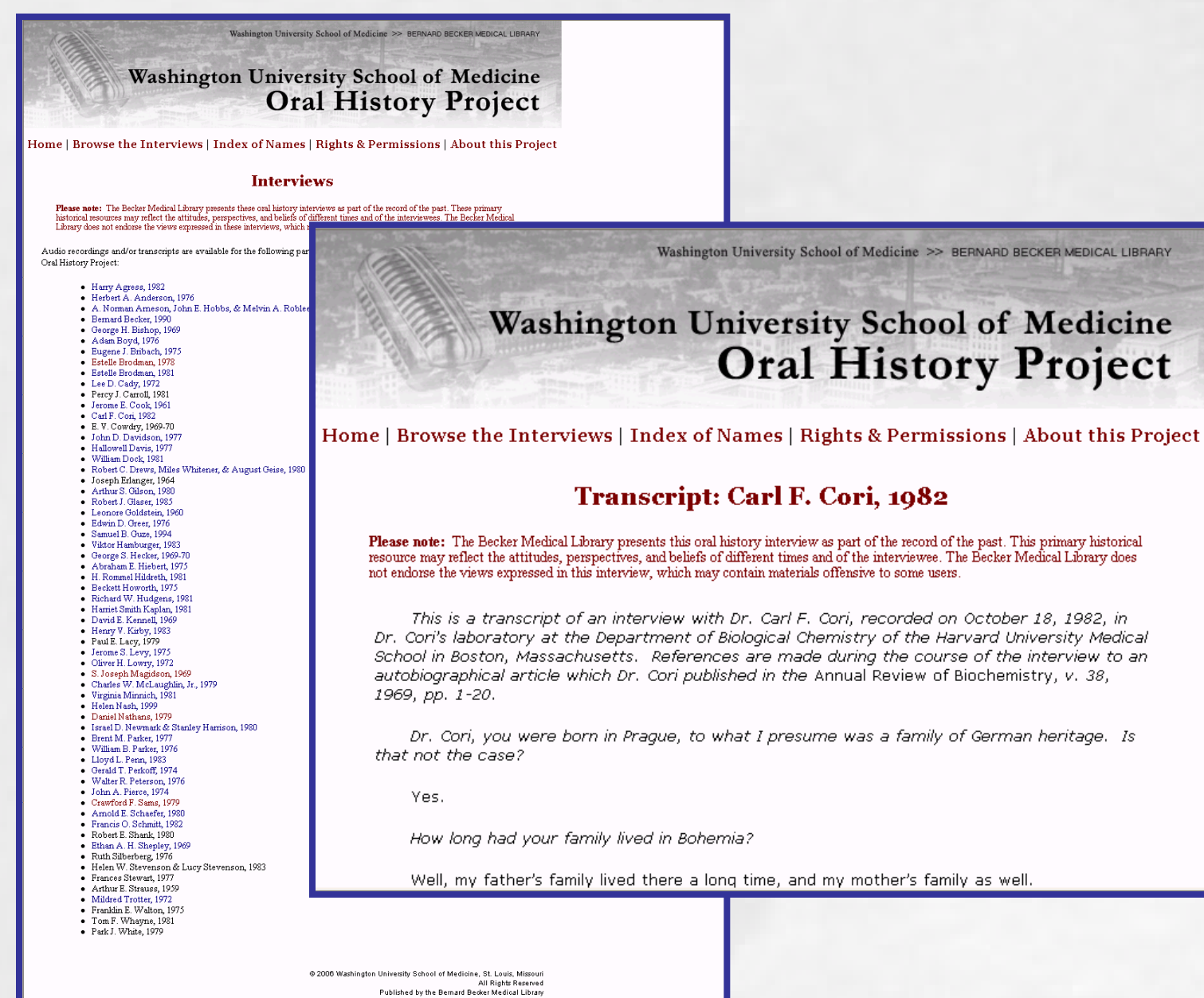
Between 1959 and 1985, Becker Medical Library recorded more than 50 oral histories of Washington University's faculty on reel-to-reel audiotape. Although the audiotapes were transcribed, nothing else was done with them and the oral histories were essentially forgotten – hidden away in archival boxes. During the past year, the oral histories have been digitized and presented, with their transcripts, on the Web. Being able to hear the voices and see pictures of the interviewees has given new life to Becker Library's oral historical materials and led to new interest in medical history in oral format.

Interviewees include:

- Medical librarian Estelle Brodman
- Nobel Laureate Carl Cori
- Nobel Laureate Joseph Erlanger
- Nobel Laureate Daniel Nathans
- Brigadier General Crawford F. Sams

Estelle Brodman

Interviewer:	Andrew K. Bertone, Loretta Struck, Barbara Halbrook, Betty Kullify, Millard Johnson
Date:	November 22, 1978
Identifier:	OHD52
Approximate Length:	17 leaves
Biographical Information:	<p>Medical librarian, born 1914. Assistant librarian for reference service at the National Library of Medicine, 1948-1961. Library director and professor of Medical History, Washington University School of Medicine, 1961-1981. Editor of the <i>Bulletin of the Medical Library Association</i>, 1947-1957; president of the Medical Library Association, 1964-1965.</p> <p>Dr. Brodman explains her pursuit of a degree in Library Science, her two years at Columbia University, and her early career in the Medical Library Association. Dr. Brodman then discusses her career at the National Library of Medicine and the differences between the Army Medical Library of the 1940s and the National Library of Medicine of the 1970s. She mentions the development of MEDLARS.</p>

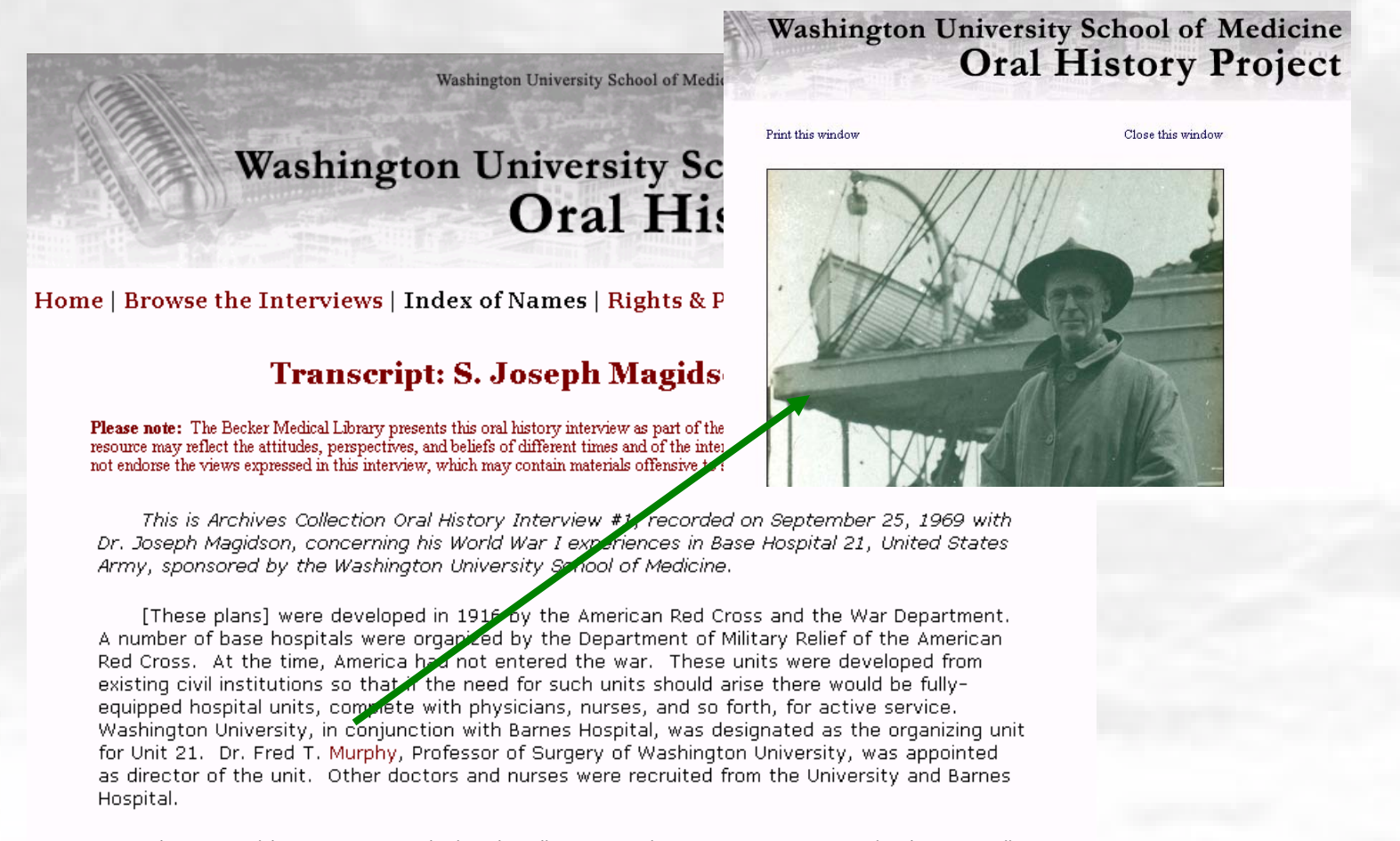


Considerations:

- Cost in time and money – Transcription is time-consuming
- Word-for-word transcription – How essential is verbatim transcription?
- Copyright, permissions, privacy issues

Future Enhancements:

- Add new oral history interviews
- Add videotaped interviews
- Make audio podcasts available
- Add search functionality
- Further linking to related resources



Results:

Interest in the history of Medicine is growing at Washington University. Since this project started, six new interviews have been conducted. Three more are scheduled, and at least five more prospective interviews are being negotiated.

Since bibliographic records for the oral histories were added to the OCLC database, we have had numerous inquiries and/or requests to use the oral histories. Use of web-based oral histories is captured with Analog 6.0 and Report Magic 2.21. An e-mail comment feature on the oral history web site aids in monitoring user satisfaction and in answering questions.